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Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, AS, VN
SUBJECT: WHITLAM STATEMENT ON VIETNAM

REF: STATE 080760

BEGIN SUMMARY:

1. WHITLAM STATEMENT QUOTED REFTEL WAS IN ANSWER TO QUES-
TION FOR OPPOSITION MHR ON 8 APRIL 75. FULL TEXT OF RE-
SPONSE IS: END SUMMARY

2. QTE NEVERTHELESS, OF COURSE THE WAR HAS KEPT ON SO LONG AND
SO MURDEROUSLY BECAUSE THE UNITED STATES HAS SUPPLIED SO MUCH
EQUIPMENT, SUCH SOPHISTICATED EQUIPMENT, TO THE SOUTH, AND
RUSSIA AND CHINA HAVE SUPPLIED IT TO THE NORTH.

3. QTE THEY HAVE BOTH DONE IT; THEY HAVE BOTH DONE IT FOR
OVER 20 YEARS. I HAVE PUT IT IN PEKING TWICE, IN MOSCOW
ONCE AND IN AMERICA HALF A DOZEN TIMES THAT BOTH OUGHT TO
LAY OFF. THIS WAR WOULD HAVE ENDED LONG AGO BUT FOR THE
FACT THAT THE GREAT POWERS FUELED IT FOR SO LONG SO MURDER-
OUSLY. OF COURSE WE ALL CONDEMN A MILITARYSOLUTION OF THE
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DISPUTE, THE CIVIL WAR IN VIETNAM. THERE IS TO BE A MILI-

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TARY SOLUTION NOW, APPARENTLY, BECAUSE THE GREAT POWERS SAW
THAT THE 2 FORCES BECAME SO WELL ARMED AND WERE SO NUMEROUSLY
RECRUITED. THEY ARE BOTH TO BLAME, I WILL NOT ATTEMPT
TO APPORTION THE BLAME, BUT THIS WAR WOULD HAVE ENDED
LONG AGO HAD THE UNITED STATES, THE USSR AND THE PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC OF CHINA ABSTAINED. END QTE

4. WHITLAM THEN GAVE A CAREFULLY PREPARED SPEECH ON INDO-
CHINA FULL TEXT OF WHICH IS REPEATED BELOW:

5. QTE THIRTY YEARS AGO FRANCE ATTEMPTED TO RE-ESTABLISH
HER FALLEN EMPIRE IN INDOCHINA. A WAR FOR INDEPENDENCE BE-
CAME A WAR OF MASSIVE FOREIGN INTERVENTION. IT ENGULFED
THE REGION. IT CHALLENGED THE MIGHT AND WILL OF THE GREAT-
EST POWER ON EARTH. IT MADE A WILDERNESS OF SOME OF THE FAIR-
EST PORTIONS OF THE GLOBE. THE MOST TRANQUIL CITY IN ASIA,
PHNOM PENH, HAS BEEN MADE, IN THE WORDS OF THE HONOURABLE
MEMBER FOR KOOYONG (MR. PEACOCK), A MIRE OF HUMAN MISERY.
CENTRES OF OLD CIVILISATIONS HAVE BEEN MADE CITIES OF DEATH.
THE WAR UNLEASHED ON A PEASANT PEOPLE THE HEAVIEST BOMBING
IN NISOTRY AND THE GREATEST FIRE POWER USED IN HISTORY. NOT
FRWER THAN TWO MILLION PEOPLE HAVE BEEN KILLED. COUNTLESS
MORE HAVE BEEN MAIMED. YET THIS WAR CONTINUES.

6. QTE IT IS 10 YEARS THIS MONTH SINCE SIR ROBERT MENZIES
ANNOUNCED THE COMMITMENT OF THE FIRST AUSTRALIAN BATTALION
TO VIETNAM. SINCE THEN IT HAS BEEN THE DUTY OF SUCCESSIVE
PRIME MINISTERS TO REPORT TO PARLIAMENT AND PEOPLE ON AUSTRAL-
IAN ACTIVITIES, ON AUSTRALIAN ACTIONS, INCLUDING ACTIVITY BY
THE ARMED FORCES, IN INDOCHINA. I AM NOW THE FIFTH AUSTRALIAN
PRIME MINISTER TO HAVE TO FULFIL THAT DUTY; BUT WITH THIS
DIFFERENCE: FOR THE FIRST TIME AN AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER
NEED REPORT ONLY ON OUR HUMANITARIAN INVOLVEMENT, INCLUDING
THE USE OF THE ARMED SERVICES AND OUR ENDEAVORS TO END THE
WAR RATHER THAN ESCALATE THE WAR.

6. QTE AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, AFTER ALL OF THE BLUNDERS
AND BLOODSHED OF 30 YEARS, WHAT TOLERABLE OR FEASIBLE OB-
JECTIVE CAN ANY FOREIGN GOVERNMENT SET FOR ITSELF EXCEPT
THE ENDING OF THE WAR, EXCEPT THE ENDING OF THE KILLING,
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AS SOON AS POSSIBLE? WE OUTSIDERS NEVER HAVE THE RIGHT
TO INTERVENE. BUT EVEN IF THERE WERE SUCH A RIGHT, OR EVEN
IF IT WAS RIGHT TO INTERVENE, WOULD ANYONE NOW SUGGEST
THAT ANY FOREIGN GOVERNMENT SHOULD RESUME THAT INTERVENTION?
IF WE HAVE LEARNT NOTHING ELSE IN THE LAST 30 YEARS, WE HAVE
SURELY LEARNT THIS MUCH, AT A HEAVY LOSS TO OURSELVES BUT AT
A TERRIBLE ONE TO THE PEOPLE WE CLAIMED TO BE HELPING.

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8. QTE FOR A GENERATION AND MORE AUSTRALIA SHARED WITH HER
PACIFIC PARTNERS A GREAT DELUSION ABOUT OUR RIGHTS, OUR IN-
TERESTS, OUR OBLIGATIONS. THOSE WHO ACTED FOR AUSTRALIA AS
THE GOVERNMENT MISTOOK ENTIRELY THE NATURE OF AUSTRALIA'S
INTERESTS AND OBLIGATIONS AND HER RIGHTS. THEY SHARED, AND
ENCOURAGED THE AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE TO ACCEPT, A DELUSION ABOUT
THE NATURE OF THE CONFLICT IN INDOCHINA. ALL OF US ARE STILL
PAYING THE PRICES FOR THOSE MISTAKES - IN ECONOMICS, IN LOSS
OF CONFIDENCE, IN WESTERN CIVILISATION ITSELF. WE CAN RE-
PAIR THE LOSSES OTHER THAN THE LIVES DESTROYED, BUT TO DO
SO IT IS NECESSARY NOT TO REPEAT THE MISTAKES OF THE PAST-
NOT JUST THE MISTAKES IN ACTION BUT THE MISTAKES OF ATTITUDE.
IT WAS A MISTAKEN ATTITUDE AFTER THE REVOLUTION IN CHINA
THAT LED, STEP BY STEP, TO THE MISTAKEN VIEW OF AUSTRALIAN
INTERESTS AND AMERICAN INTERESTS AND MISTAKEN ACTIONS IN INDO-
CHINA. SURELY WE HAVE LEARNT OUR LESSON AT LAST.

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QTE FOR 20 YEARS THERE HAS BEEN ANKIND OF TRAGIC INEVITABILITY
ABOUT THE EVENTS NOW TAKING PLACE. THE GREAT CHANCE, THE GREAT
OPPORTUNITY, FOR A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, FOR PEACE THROUGH-
OUT INDOCHINA, WAS GIVEN IN 1954 Y THE GENEVA AGREEMENTS.
THE CHANCE WAS LOST; THE OPPORTUNITY WAS THROWN AWAY. THE
GENEVA AGREEMENTS PROVIDED THE 2 BASIC INGREDIENTS FOR A

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POLITICAL SETTLEMENT - RE-UNIFICATION AFTER FREE ELECTIONS.
IF SUCH ELECTIONS HAD BEEN HELD THEY WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY
HAVE RESULTED IN THE POWER OVER A UNIFIED VIETNAM UNDER HO
CHI MINH. RATHER THAN FACE THIS PROSPECT THE REGIME IN
SAIGON, URGED ON BY THE THEN UNITED STATES ADMINISTRATION,
REFUSED TO HOLD ELECTIONS. THE RESULT HAS BEEN THAT AN OUT-
COME WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED BY POLITICAL MEANS 20
YEARS AGO - AN OUTOCME CERTAINLY FORESEEN BY THE PARTIES TO
THE GENEVA AGREEMENTS, WHETHER THEY WELCOMED IT OR NOT - NOW
SEEMS LIKELY TO BE ACHIEVED ONLY AFTER THESE 20 MORE YEARS
OF BLOODSHED. THE NEXT GREAT EFFORT TO ACHIEVE A POLI-
TICAL SOLUTION RESULTED IN THE PARIS AGREEMENTS OF JANUARY
1973. ONCE AGAIN THOSE AGREEMENTS ENVISAGED A GOVERNMENT
OF ONE VIETNAM WITH PARTICIPATION OF ALL PARITES, NOT
JUST THE GOVERNMENTS OF SAIGON AND HANOI BUT THE PROVISION-
AL REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT - THE VIET CONT SO CALLED. NEITHER
THE GENEVA AGREEMENTS NOR THE PARIS AGREEMENTS EVER ALLOWED
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THE IDEA THAT NORTH AND SOUTH VIETNAM WERE TWO SEPARATE COUN-
TRIES. AS ARTICLE 15 OF THE PARIS AGREEMENTS STATES:

9. INT QTE THE MILITARY DEMARCATION LINE BETWEEN THE TWO ZONES
AT THE SEVENTEENTH PARALLEL IS ONLY PROVISIONAL AND NOT A
POLITICAL OR TERRIRORIAL BOUNDARY, AS PROVIDED FOR IN PARAGRAPH
6 OF THE FINAL DECLARATION OF THE 1954 GENEVA CONFERENCE. END
INT QTE

10. QTE IN OTHER WORDS, FROM 1954 TO THE PRESENT DAY, FROM
THE FALL OF DIEN BIEN PHU 21 YEARS AGO TO THE FALL OF HUE 2
WEEKS AGO, THE WAR IN VIETNAM HAS RETAINED ITS ESSENTIAL
CHARACTER. IT IS A CIVIL WAR. THE REAL CHARACTER OF THE
WAR HAS NEVER CHANGED. WHAT HAS CHANGED IS THE NATURE
OF THE FIGHTING AND THE LEVEL OF VIOLENCE. THAT CHANGE,
WITH ALL THE ADDITIONAL SUFFERING AND KILLING IT HAS CAUSED,
IS OVERWHELMINGLY DUE TO ONE FACTOR - FOREIGN INTERVENTION.
THE REAL RESULT OF FOREIGN INTERVENTION, PRINCIPALLY THE
UNITED STATES ON THE SIDE OF SAIGON AND RUSSIA ON THE SIDE
OF HANOI, HAS BEEN TO RAISE THE LEVEL OF VIOLENCE, TO RAISE
THE CAPACITY FOR MUTUAL DESTRUCTION ON BOTH SIDES. THAT
IS, IF THE TWO SIDES INSISTED ON A SOLUTION BY MILITARY MEANS,
THEN FOREIGN INTERVENTION MADE IT CERTAIN THAT THE END -
WHATEVER THE OUTCOME - WOULD BE AS BLOODY AS POSSIBLE. WHAT
OUTSIDERS, INCLUDING AUSTRALIA, HAVE DONE IS TO CREATE TWO
OF THE WORLD'S LARGETT ARMIES. THAT IS OUR REAL LEGACY TO
VIETNAM. THAT IS ALMOST THE SOLE MILITARY RESULT
OF YEARS OF INTERVENTION. LET THOSE WHO YEAR AFTER YEAR
ENCOURAGED A MILITARY SOLUTION, THOSE WHO DECRIED AS WEAKNESS
OR EVEN TREASON THE CALLS FOR NEGOTIATIONS AND THE CALLS FOR
POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, NOW, AND AT LAST, RECOGNISE THE REAL

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CONSEQUENCES OF THEIR WORK. THESE STRONGMEN, THESE REALISTS, THE MEN ON HORSE-BACK, ISISTED UPON A MILITARY SOLUTION. SO A MILITARY SOLUTION IT IS NOW TO BE. INT QTE LOOK ON YOUR WORKS, YE MIGHTY, AND DESPAIR. END INT QTE

11. QTE. IT SHOULD ALSO BE EMPHASIZED THAT BOTH THE GENEVA AGREEMENTS AND THE PARIS AGREEMENTS ENVISAGED THAT ALL CONTENDING PARTIES WOULD SHARE POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY IN A RE-UNITED VIETNAM. THE GENEVA AGREEMENTS ENVISAGED FREE ELECTIONS. THE PARIS AGREEMENTS PROVIDED FOR A NATIONAL RECONCILIATION COUNCIL
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TO ARRANGE FOR GENERAL ELECTIONS IN SOUTH VIETNAM. ARTICLE 12 STATED:

12. INT QTE IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE CEASE-FIRE, THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE PARTIES SHALL HOLD CONSULTATIONS IN A SPIRIT OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AND CONCORD, MUTUAL RESPECT, AND MUTUAL NON-ELIMINATION TO SET UP A NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AND CONCORD OF THREE EQUAL SEGMENTS... AFTER THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AND CONCORD HAS ASSUMED ITS FUNCTIONS, THE TWO SOUTH VIETNAMESE PARTIES WILL CONSULT ABOUT THE FORMATION OF COUNCILS AT LOWER LEVELS. THE TWO SOUTH VIETNAMESE PARTIES SHALL SIGN AN AGREEMENT ON THE INTERNAL MATTERS OF SOUTH VIETNAM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND DO THEIR UTMOST TO ACCOMPLISH THIS WITHIN NINETY DAYS AFTER THE CEASE-FIRE COMES INTO EFFECE END INT QTE

13. QTE THIS WAS THE CRUCIAL POLITICAL ARTICLE OF THE PARIS AGREEMENTS. THE SAIGON GOVERNMENT HAS REFUSED TO ACT OT IMPLEMENT THIS CENTRAL PROVISION IT HAS NOT BEEN PREPARED TO JOIN WITH THE PROVISIONAL REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT. THIS BREACH IS THE KEY TO THE JUSTIFICATION FOR MILITARY RETALIATION CLAIMED BY THE OPPONENTS OF THE SAIGON GOVERNMENT.

14. QTE BECAUSE THE POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES HAVE BEEN FOR A SECOND TIME LOST, A MILITARY SOLUTION BECAME INEVITABLE IN THE BROADER SENSE. THIS DOES NOT MEAN, HOWEVER, THAT THE ACTUAL AND SPECIFIC EVENTS OF THE PAST 3 WEEKS WERE THEMSELVES INEVITABLE. THE OVER-RUNNING OF SO MUCH OF SOUTH VIETNAM IS BY NO MEANS A CLASSIC EXAMPLE OF A BLITZKREIG. IN VERY LARGE MEASURE THE NORTH VIETNAMESE FORCES HAVE BEEN MOVING INTO A MILITARY VACUUM. THE UNITED STATES' DEFENCE SECRETARY, MR. SCHLESINGER, SAID ON 31 MARCH THAT IT WAS SAIGON'S WITHDRAWAL RATHER THAN A COMMUNIST GENERAL OFFENSIVE WHICH WAS THE PRIMARY CAUSE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM'S PRESENT DIFFICULTIES. PRESIDENT FORD SAID ON 3 APRIL:

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15. INT QTE A UNILATERAL DECISION TO WITHDRAW CREATED THE CHAOTIC SITUATION THAT EXISTS NOW. IT WAS A UNILATERAL DECISION BY PRESIDENT THIEU. END INT QTE

16. QTE TO STATE THESE FACTS IS NOT TO CONDONE BREACHES OF THE PARIS AGREEMENTS BY NORTH VIETNAM. THERE HAVE BEEN GROSS BREACHES REPEATEDLY BY BOTH SIDES. IT IS JUST A PLAIN STATEMENT OF FACT THAT THE IMMEDIATE CHAOTIC SITUATION NORTH OF SAIGON IS DUE TO THE UNILATERAL DECISION BY PRESIDENT THIEU. IN THE WORDS OF THE AUSTRALIAN JOURNALIST DENIS WARNER - CLOSE AS HE IS TO MILITARY COUNCILS IN SAIGON:

17. INT QTE THE SHATTERING LOSS OF CENTRAL VIETNAM, WHICH HAS SWUNG THE BALANCE OF FORCES ENTIRELY IN HANOI'S FAVOUR, WAS NOT CAUSED BY ENEMY ACTION BUY BY HIDEOUS BLUNDERS IN SAIGON. END INT QTE

18. QTE THE DECISION TO WITHDRAW AND, PERHAPS, EVEN MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE WAY IT WAS MADE, WITH NO EXPLANATION, NO CONSULTATION, NO COMMUNICATION, HAD TWO IMMEDIATE RESULTS. IT DESTROYED THE MORALE OF THE ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM, AND IT SPREAD PANIC TO THE POPULATION.

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19. QTE IT IS IN THIS SITUATION OF UNPARRALLED CHAOS AND UN-
EXPECTED RAPIDITY OF EVENTS - UNEXPECTED IN HANOI ITSELF - THAT
THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS TRIED TO APPLY ITS RESOURCES TO
SAVE LIVES, TO RELIEVE SUFFERING.

20. IT MUST BE EMPHASIZED THAT THE SUDDENNESS OF THE COLLAPSE
IN SOUTH VIETNAM LIMITED THE SCOPE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF ANY AID
GIVEN BY THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT OR BY ANY OTHER GOVERNMENT.

21. MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION HAVE CHOSEN TO BELITTLE OUR EFFORTS.
FOR EXAMPLE, THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (MR. MALCOLM
FRASER) PARTICULARISED OUR PARTICIPATION IN THE ATTEMPTED
EVACUATION OF DA NANG AS A INT QTE FUTILE AND PATHETIC
GESTURE - TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE. END INT QTE THE TRUTH IS
THAT THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT MET, AS SOON AS IT WAS RE-
CIEVED THROUGHT THE AMERICAN EMBASSY, A REQUEST FROM THE GO-
VERNMENT OF SOUTH VIETNAM FOR ASSISTANCE. THE DECISION WAS
TAKEN TO MAKE AVAILABLE SEVEN HERCULES TRANSPORT AIR-
CRAFT TOGETHER WITH OTHER AIRCRAFT CURRENTLY BASED AT
BUTTERWORTH IN MALAYSIA. ON 2 APRIL I RECEIVED THE FOLLOW-
ING MESSAGE:

22. INT QTE PLEASE ACCEPT MY WARM APPRECIATION AND DEEP
ADMIRATION FOR YOUR HELP T EVACUATE THE MANY DESPERATE RE-
FUGEES FROM DA NANG. AUSTRALIA CAN TAKE GREAT PRIDE IN THE
RAPID DECISION TO MEET AN ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL HUMANITARIAN
REQUIREMENT. WARMEST RESPECT. (SIGNED) ADMIRAL NOEL GAYLER,
UNITED STATES COMMANDER IN CHIEF PACIFIC. END INT QTE

23. QTE TWO DAYS LATER, THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR CALLED ON
THE SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO CONGRAT-
ULATE THE INT QTE GOOD SHOW END INT QTE THAT AUSTRALIA HAD PUT
UP.

24. QTE THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT LAST YEAR CONTRIBUTED $1.5 M
TO INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS TO BE SPENT IN INDOCHINA - ON
BOTH SIDES -DURING THE CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR. ON 28 MARCH
THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED A FURTHER CONTRIBUTION OF
$200,000 TO THE INDOCHINA OPERATIONS GROUP OF THE INTERNATIONAL
RED CROSS, WHICH OPERATES THROUGHOUT INDOCHINA. ON 2 APRIL I
ANNOUNCED A FURTHER CONTRIBUTION OF $1M TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES' RELIEF WORK AMONG REFUGEES IN
ALL PARTS OF INDOCHINA, ON BOTH SIDES OF THE LINES OF MILITARY
CONTROL. ON 3 APRIL I OPENED A PUBLIC APPEAL FOR A $5M

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REFUGEE AID FUND, TO BE CO-RODINATED BY THE DISASTER EMER-
GENCY COMMITTE OF THE AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR OVERSEAS AID.

25. QTE YESTERDAY THE FOREIGN MINISTER (SENATOR WILLESEE)
ANNOUNCED A FURTHER GRANT OF $1M TO THE UNITES NATIONS HIGH
COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES. THIS BRINGS THE TOTAL AUSTRALIAN
GOVERNMENT AID TO INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN ORGANISATIONS
OPERATING IN INDOCHINA TO $3.4 M THIS FINANCIAL YEAR.

26. QTE THE ACTION WHICH HAS ATTRACTED MOST ATTENTION IS OF
COURSE THE BRINGING OF CHILDREN TO AUSTRALIA. IN THIS MATTER,
THE SOLE ROLE OF THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT WAS TO BRING ELI-
GIBLE CHILDREN TO SUITABLE ADOPTIVE FAMILIES AS PROMPTLY AND
AS SAFELY AS POSSIBLE. NOBODY HAS BEEN HELPED BY UNFOUNDED
CLAIMS THAT VAST NUMBERS OF ORPHANS WERE WAITING FOR EVACUA-
TION FROM SAIGON.

27. QTE AT ALL TIMES, THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN BOUND
TO REQUIRE TWO CONDITIONS: THAT ORPHANS WOULD BE APPROVED FOR
EXIT FROM SAIGON BY THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT FOR ADOP-
TION IN AUSTRALIA; AND THAT THE STATES AND AUSTRALIA OULD
GUARANTEE THAT NORMAL ADOPTION PROCEDURES WOULD BE OBSERVED.

28. QTE AS SOON AS THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT RECEIVED ADVICE
THAT THE FIRST REQUIREMENT HAD BEEN MET AND THAT, ON THE SECOND,
THE STATES HAD APPROVED 246 ADOPTING FAMILIES, ARRANGEMENTS
WERE MADE TO BRING THE ORPANS BY HERCULES TRANSPORT TO BANGKOK
AND BY CHARTERED QANTAS JET TO SYDNEY. AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT
AUTHORITIES FOUND THAT MANY OF THE CHILDREN EVACUATED FROM
SAIGON WERE THE SUBJECT OF UNCOMPLETED OFF-SHORE ADOPTION PRO-
CEDURES IN SOUTH VIETNAM BY AUSTRALAIN NATIONALS. FACED WITH
THIS FACT, MY GOVERNMENT DETERMINED THAT IT COULD DO NOTHING
IN THE MATTER OF ALLOCATING CHILDREN TO FAMILIES AS THIS WAS
CLEARLY A STATE RESPONSIBILITY AND THEREFORE IF THERE WAS TO
BE ANY DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN ADOPTIVE FAILIES ABOUT THE CHIL-
DREN THEN IT WAS A MATTER FOR THE STATES TO DETERMINE.

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29. QTE THE GOVERNMENT HAD ARRANGED FOR AN AIRCRAFT TO DEPART SYDNEY YESTERDAY AFTERNOON FOR BANGKOK TO EVACUATE A SECOND GROUP OF ORPHANS. THAT AIRCRAFT DID NOT TAKE OFF, FOLLOWING ADVICE FROM OUR AMBASSADOR IN SAIGON THAT THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE AUTHORITIES DECIDED NOT TO RELEASE ANY MORE CHILDREN AS THEY WISHED TO RECONSIDER THEIR POLICY ON ADOPTION BY FOREIGN NATIONALS. OUR AMBASSADOR HAS BEEN UNABLE TO CONFIRM REPORTS THAT THIS DECISION HAS SINCE BEEN REVERSED.

30. QTE I SHOULD POINT OUT,HOWEVER, THAT THE DECISION ITSELF AMPLY DEMONSTRATES THAT THERE IS NO LARGE POOL OF ORPHANS AWAITING URGENT EVACUATION AND, FURTHER, THAT THE SAIGON GOVERNMENT HAS PROPERLY INSISTED ON THE PERFORMANCE OF ITS OWN POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.

31. QTE THE ACTIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT IN THE IMMEDIATE EMERGENCY ARE PART OF THE LONGSTANDING PROGRAM AND POLICY WE HAVE ADOPTED SINCE ACHIEVING OFFICE. OUR IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE HAS BEEN TO DO WHAT WE CAN TO STOP THE FIGHTING; TO BRING THE WAR TO AN END. OUR LONG-TERM OBJECTIVE HAS BEEN TO HELP REBUILD A DEVASTATED VIETNAM AND HELP REHABILITATE ITS PEOPLE. WE HAVE CONSISTENTLY PURSUED BOTH OBJECTIVES SINCE DECEMBER 1972. THE MOST IMPORTANT STEP OPEN TO AUSTRALIA TO
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REDUCE THE LEVEL OF VIOLECE WAS ALWAYS TO STOP CONTRIBUTING MILITARILY TO THAT VIOLENCE. WITHIN A WEEK OF TAKING OFFICE WE ORDERED THE END OF AUSTRALIA'S MILITARY INVOLVEMENT INVIETNAM AND CAMBODIA.

32. QTE THE SECOND CONTRIBUTIONOPEN TO AUSTRALIA WAS TO USE DIPLOMATIC INFLUENCE TO END THE FIGHTING. IN PARTICULAR THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS TRIED TO PROMOTE ADHERENCE TO THE PARIS AGREEMENTS. WE HAVE LOST NO OPPORTUNITY TO ENCOURAGE THE VIETNAMESE PARTIES TO IMPLEMENT THE AGREEMENTS TO THE FULL, AND TO DEPLORE THE BREACHES OF THE AGREEMENTS BY BOTH SIDES. AND, OF COURSE, WE HABE BEEN ABLE TO DO THIS ONLY BECAUSE WE ARE DIPLOMATICALLY REPRESENTED IN BOTH SAIGON

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AND HANOI.

33. QTE THESE ATTITUDES HAVE CONSISTENTLY BEEN EXPRESSED OVER
THE PAST 15 MONTHS BY ME AND BY THE FOREIGN MINISTER AT
THE HIGHEST LEVEL, AND BY PERSONAL CONTACT BETWEEN VIETNAMESE

MINISTERS AND OFFICIALS AND SOME OF MY COLLEAGUES, INCLUDING
THE SPECIAL MINISTER OF STATE (MR. LIONEL BOWEN), THE DEPUTY
PRIME MINISTER (DR. J.F. CAIRNS) AND THE MINISTER FOR DEFENCE
(MR. BARNARD).

34. QTE AS RECENTLY AS 13 MARCH I WROTE TO BOTH PRESIDENT THIEU
AND THE NORTH VIETNAMESE FOREIGN MINISTER STRESSING AUSTRALIA'S
SUPPORT FOR THE IMPLEMENTATIONOF THE AGREEMENTS, OUR CONCERN
AT THE CONTINUED LACK OF PROGRESS, THE CONTINUED FIGHTING AND
THE CONTINUING BREACHES OF THE AGREEMENTS BY BOTH SIDES.

35. QTE THE FACT IS THAT THE AUSTRALAIN GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN
FOREMOST AMONG NATIONS INSEEKING TO END THE WAR AND RELIEVE
THE SUFFERING IT HAS CAUSED. IN THIS IMMEDIATE EMERGENCY, NO
GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN MORE ACTIVE, MORE CONCERNED AND, REFLECTING
THE WISHES OF THE AUSTRALLIAN PEOPLE, MORE GENEROUS. AND IT IS
WORTH NOTING THAT THE REAL REASON WHY THE AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE EX-
PECT THEIR GOVERMENT SO TO ACT. WHY DOES VIETNAM INVOKE A
VERY SPECIAL KIND OF EMOTION AND CONCERN AND COMPASSION IN AUS-
TRALIA? IT IS NOT JUST THE SCALE AND EXTENT OF THE SUFFERING,
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WHICH IS NOT, UNHAPPLIY, UNIQUE, NOT EVEN UNUSUAL IN THIS
TROUBLED WORLD. THE REFUGEE, THE HOMELESS, THE STARVING,
THE INNOCENT VICTIMS OF WAR NUMBER MILLIONS UPON MILLIONS
ACROSS THREE CONTINENTS. BUT VIETNAM HAS A POWER OVER THE
AUSTRALIAN CONSCIENCE FOR ONE PARTICULAR REASON.
THE AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE HAVE ACCEPTED THE TRUTH-THE BITTER
TURTH-THAT THE INTERVENTION INTO WHICH THEY WERE LED WAS DIS-
ASTROUSLY WRONG, THAT IT ONLY INCREASED AND LENGTHENED THE
AGONY OF VIETNAM. THE AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE HAVE ACKNOWLEDGED
THE TRUTH IN THE SAME WAY AS THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AND THE
AMERICAN CONGRESS HAVE ACKNOWLEDGED IT. BUT IS THE TRUTH
OF THE DISASTER ACKNOWLEDGED BY ITS AUTHORS AND THEIR ABETTORS?

36. QTE ONE OF THE MOST DEPRESSING ASPECTS OF THIS WHOLE TRAGIC
EPISODE HAS BEEN THE LAMENTABLE PERFORMANCE OF THE OPPOSITION
IN THE PAST 2 WEEKS. I HAVE LISTENED WITH INCREASING DISMAY
AND CONTEMPT TO THE STATEMENTS BY SPOKESMEN FOR THE OPPOSITION.
I PASS OVER THE HUMBUG AND HYPOCRISY-PAR FOR THE COURSE-BUT
THE TRULY DEPRESSING THING HAS BEEN THE MOUNTING EVIDENCE THAT
WITH THE OPPOSITION NOTHING HAS CHANGED. THE YEARS OF DES-

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RUCTION HAVE CHANGED NOTHING. THE PRESENT LEADER OF THE OPPO-
SITION HAS EVEN REVIVED THE DOMINO THEORY, SMARTLY DISMISSED
BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF SINGAPORE AS INT QTE OLD HASH QND INT
QTE. THE ONE GREAT CONSTANT IN THE ATTITUDE OF THE PARTIES
OPPOSITE TO THE WAY IN VIETNAME, THROUGHOUT THE PERIOD OF AUS-
TRALIA'S INVOLVEMENT, WAS THEIR DETERMINATION TO SQUEEZE EVERY
DROP OF POLITICAL ADVANTAGE OUT OF IT. AND EVEN N THE FINAL
THROES, THEY ARE AT IT AGIAN. ONE COULD HEAR ALL THE CHOES
FROM THE PAST, RIGHT FROM THAT UNFORGETTABLE NIGHT 10 YEARS
AGO, 28 APRIL 1965, WHEN FROM THIS SIDE OF THE HOUSE THEY BAYED
AND BRAYED WITH DELIGHT THEY DID NOT BOTHER TO CONCEAL AS
SIR ROBERT MENZIES ANNOUNCED THE FIRST INSTALMENT OF AUS-
TRALIA'S MILITARY COMMITMENT. IT WAS THEIR FINEST HOUR.

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THEY LAUGHED AS THEY LIED THEIR WAY INTO THAT WAR.BUT THROUGH-
OUT THE SUBSEQUET YEARS, IN ANY DEBATE WHICH HAD TO DEAL WITH
ANY AMERICAN INITIATIVES TO DISENGAGE OR DEESCALATE THE WAR,
THEY WERE NOTABLE FOR THEIR SULLEN SILENCE. THE ONLY OCCASION
THEIR SPIRITS REVIVED WAS WHEN, 5 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH, PRESI-
DENT NIXON UNLEASHED HIS BOMBERS ON CAMBODIA, ESCALATING THE
WAR TO ITS MOST FEROCIOUS LEVEL AND TRANSFORMING A HAVEN OF
FRAGILE PEACE INTO A WAR-RAVAGED WILDERNEES.

37. QTE IN THE ORCHESTRATED OUTPOURINGS OF THE PAST WEEK THERE

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HAS BEEN JUST ONE NEW NOTE - MUTED AS YET, BUT CLEARLY DESIGN-
ED TO BECOME A GRAND NEW THEME - AND THAT IS THAT THE UNITED
STATES IS AN UNTRUSTWORTHY ALLY. THE IRONY OF IT* WE ARE WIT-
NESSING THE BEGINNING OF A NEW EFFORT TO SOW THE SEEDS OF FEAR
AND SUSPCICIN AND DIVISION IN AUSTRALIA. WHAT ELSE IS THE
PURPOSE OF THIS ATTEMPT TO BLAME THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS
AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE FOR THE DEBACLE IN WHICH THE GOVERN-
MENT OF SOUTH VIETNAM NOW FINDS ITSELF? THERE COULD BE ONLY
ONE OTHER MOTIVE - TO SHAME THE UNITED STATES BACK INTO INDO-
CHINA. IS THIS THE WISH OF THE OPPOSITION? IS THIS ITS PROPO-
SAL FOR EITHER THE UNITED STATES OR AUSTRALIA: TO GET BACK
INTO THE SAR; TO PROLONG IT FOR YET ANOTHER DECADE? IF THAT
IS NOT THE PORPOSAL, THEN WHAT CRITICISM OF SUBSTANCE CAN IT
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HAVE AGAINST MY GOVERNMENT'S ATTITUDES OR ACTIONS WITH REGARD
TO INDOCHINA, NOW OR AT ANY TIME IN THE PAST 2 YEARS AND 4 MONTHS?

38. QTE IN THE HEADY DAYS WHEN VIETNAM WAS A POPULAR WAR, WHEN
IT WAS A POLITICAL GOLDMINE, BEFORE THE PEOPLE OF AUSTRALIA
CAME TO SEE ITS IMPLICATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES FOR INDOCHINA,
FOR AUSTRALIA, FOR THE UNITED STATES, THE CONSTANT
CHALLENGE MADE IN THIS HOUSE, NOT LEAST FROM THE PRESENT LEADER
OF THE OPPOSITION, WAS INT QTE STAND UP AND BE COUNTED. END
INT QTE INDEED, THE FIRST TIME THIS CHALLENGE WAS RAISED IN
THIS HOUSE WAS AGAINST MET, BY THE THEN PRIME MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL
AFFAIRS, NOW LORD CASEY - 21 YEARS AGO. IT WAS IN 1954 THAT
IN THIS HOUSE I FIRST WARNED AGAINST AUSTRALIAN OR AMERICAN
MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN INDOCHINA. LET THE MEMBERS OF THE
OPPOSITION NOW STAND UP AND BE COUNTED AND SAY THAT THEY BELIEVE
IT WAS WRONG THAT WE SHOULD HAVE GOT COMPLETELY OUT OF THE WAR
OR BELIEVE THAT THE UNITED STATES OR AUSTRALIA SHOULD GO BACK
INTO THE WAR.

39. QTE AS TO THE UNITED STATES, SHE HAS FULFILLED ANY OBLI-
GATIONS SHE ASSUMED TO HE GOVERNMENT OF SAIGON. NEITHER THE
HONOUR NOR THE INTERESTS OF A GREAT PEOPLE CAN BE CONFIDED
TO ANY PARTICULAR FOREIGN REGIME. BUT THE UNITED STATES'
HONOUR AND INTERESTS DO LIE IN HELPING REBUILD A UNIFIED
VIETNAM, THE UNIFICATION OF WHICH MISGUIDED POLICIES, MIS-
TAKEN POLICIES OF THE PAST SO LONG DELAYED; THE UNITED STATES'
HONOUR AND INTEREST LIE IN HELPING TO REBUILD AN INDOCHINA
TO THE DEVASTATION OF WHICH THOSE POLICIES SO GREATLY CONTRI-
BUTED. THAT IS THE WAY FOR THE UNITED STATES TO REGAIN
HER REAL PLACE OF LEADERSHIP IN OUR REGION. TO HELPING IN
SUCH A TASK, THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT IS ALREADY COMMITTED,
INDEED, ALREADY CONTRIBUTING. AND IN THAT TASK AUSTRALIA,
AS FAR AS THIS GOVERNMENT IS CONCERNED, WILL BE A GOOD PART-
NER WITH THE UNITED STATES.

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40.QTE WE WILL HAVE NO TRUCK WITH THOSE WHO PUT OUT THE LINE
THAT THE UNITED STATES SHOULD RESUME HER INTERVENION IN THE
WAR. WE WILL HAVE NO TRUCK WITH ANY SUGGESTION THAT AMERICA'S
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HONOUR OR REPUTATION REQUIRES RESUMED INTERVENTION. WE
WILL HAVE NO TRUCK WITH THOSE WHO SEEK TO BUILD A NEW PHIL-
OSOPHY OF FEAR UPON THE UNWARRANTED ASSERTION OF AMERICAN
DISHONOUR IN REFUSING TO INTERVENE WITH FORCE
ON BEHALF OF THE SAIGON GOVERNMENT.

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41. QTE WHILE THE SECURITY OF AUSTRALIA HAS NEVER RESTED
SOLEY UPON THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE, THAT ALLIANCE REMAINS
A KEY ELEMENT IN IT. AND WHATEVER THE OUTCOME OF THE EVENTS
NOW UNFOLDING IN VIETNAM, THE BASIC ELEMENTS OF AUSTRALIA'S
SECURITY REMAIN UNTOUCHED.

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42. QTE WHO RULES IN SAIGON IS NOT, AND NEVER HAS BEEN, AN
INGREDIENT IN AUSTRALIA'S SECURITY. OUR STRENGTH, OUR SE-
CURITY, REST ON FACTORS AND RELATIONSHIPS ULTIMATELY UNCHANGED
BY THESE EVENTS. THE REALLY IMPORTANT FACTORS AND RELATIONS
ARE THOSE WHICH HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED BY THE AUSTRALIAN
GOVERNMENT SINCE DECEMBER 1972-OUR RELATIONS WITH OUR CLOSEST
AND LARGEST NEIGHBOUR, INDONESIA; OUR RELATIONS WITH OUR GREAT-
EST TRADING PARTNER, JAPAN; OUR RELATIONS WITH CHINA; OUR
ACTIVE SUPPORT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COOPERATION BETWEEN THE
MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH EAST ASIAN NATIONS; OUR
EFFORTS TO ENSURE THAT THE INDIAN OCEAN DOES NOT BECOME THE NEXT
AREA OF CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE SUPER-POWERS AS INDOCHINA BE-
CAME, IN A SENSE, THE FIRST. ABOVE ALL, AUSTRALIA'S SECURITY,
AS WITH THE PEACE OF THE WORLD, RESTS ULTIMATELY UPON MAKING
THE DETENTE BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION A
SUCCESS AND UPON ASSOCIATING CHINA IN A WIDER DETENTE. THESE
ARE THE GREAT RELATIONSHIPS AND THE GREAT FACTORS WHICH DETER-
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MINE THE SECURITY OF AUSTRALIA. THIS GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN UN-
REMITTING IN ITS EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN THOSE RELATIONSHIPS.
THOSE EFFORTS HAVE BEEN REWARDED WITH REMARKABLE SUCCESS.

43. QTE IT IS NOT POSSIBLE THAT THE NIGHTMARE OF VIETNAM WILL
EVER PASS FROM THE MEMORY OR THE CONSCIENCE OF ANY MAN OR
WOMAN OF OUR TIME. NOR SHOULD IT. BUT THE WORK WE ARE NOW
DOING TO BUILD GOOD, CONSTRUCTIVE RELATIONS WITH PEOPLES
AND NATIONS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD WILL OUTLIVE EVEN THAT
BITTER MEMORY, WILL OUTLAST EVEN THE BAD AND DESTRUCTIVE
THINGS INFLICTED ON THE PEOPLE OF VIETNAM DURING THE PAST
30 YEARS. END QTE
GREEN

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